

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

The American people are the victims of a hoax. They have been deceived by the myth that a metal box in the hands of an investigator can detect truth or falsehood. But there is no "lie detector", neither machine nor human.

The Federal government has aided and abetted this Great Lie Detector Hoax by spending millions of dollars on polygraph machines -- the so-called "lie detection" devices -- and on salaries for hundreds of Federal investigators to give thousands of polygraph examinations. Yet research completed so far has failed to prove that a polygraph interrogation actually detects lies or determines guilt or innocence. While Federal investigators testified to their great faith in the polygraph technique, they admitted there are neither statistics nor facts to prove its value. Nevertheless, the Federal government is going ahead with plans to extend the use of polygraphs, and develop more complex interrogation devices.

The overwhelming majority of Federal investigators who operate polygraphs have neither the qualifications nor the training for their work. However, establishment of the most stringent qualifications for polygraph operators will not assure their high moral standards. Most Federal agencies have such weak controls over the use of polygraphs that incompetent operators are permitted to give examinations without top level approval. Individuals under interrogation are persuaded to disclose all past indiscretions, and investigators often make a farce of the voluntary nature of the examination by noting in government files any refusal to submit to the polygraph test. To these practices, the indecencies of two-way mirrors and hidden microphones are added in many Federal investigation chambers.

Federal investigators rely upon polygraph examinations for everything from top security investigations to minor pilfering cases. Thus, the polygraph examination has become a crutch, not only replacing proven procedures of criminal investigation, but also serving as a weak link in our security system.